Agriculture

Forest Service

Alaska Region
R10-MB-92

1989

1989
Annual Report
Ketchikan Area
Tongass National Forest

"Caring for the Land and Serving People"

in

Southern Southeast Alaska

TONGASS NATIONAL FOREST

United States Department of Agriculture
Forest Service
Region 10
Tongass National Forest
Ketchikan Area
Federal Building
Ketchikan, AK 99901

Reply To: 1620

Date: January 29, 1990

Dear Citizen:

We would like to use this annual report to brief you on some of the work we did on the Ketchikan Area, Tongass National Forest in FY 1989 (October 1, 1988 - September 30, 1989). Some of the year's highlights include issuing Final Environmental Impact Statements and Records of Decision for the Quartz Hill Operating Plan, the Ketchikan Pulp Company 1989-94 Operating Plan and the permit for the Navy's acoustical testing facility on Back Island. We again completed many projects using partnerships with the private sector and State and Local governments. We also moved the Southeast Alaska Visitor Information Center a couple of steps closer to reality, and continued to support the Tongass Land Management Plan Revision with staff from our offices.

We hope our report will help you understand some of what we are doing to manage the Ketchikan Area of the Tongass National Forest. If it stimulates a question or triggers a comment, feel free to jot it down in the "Suggestion Box" at the end of the report and send it to me. I look forward to hearing from anyone who has an interest in the Tongass.

Sincerely,

Mike Lunn

J. MICHAEL LUNN
Forest Supervisor

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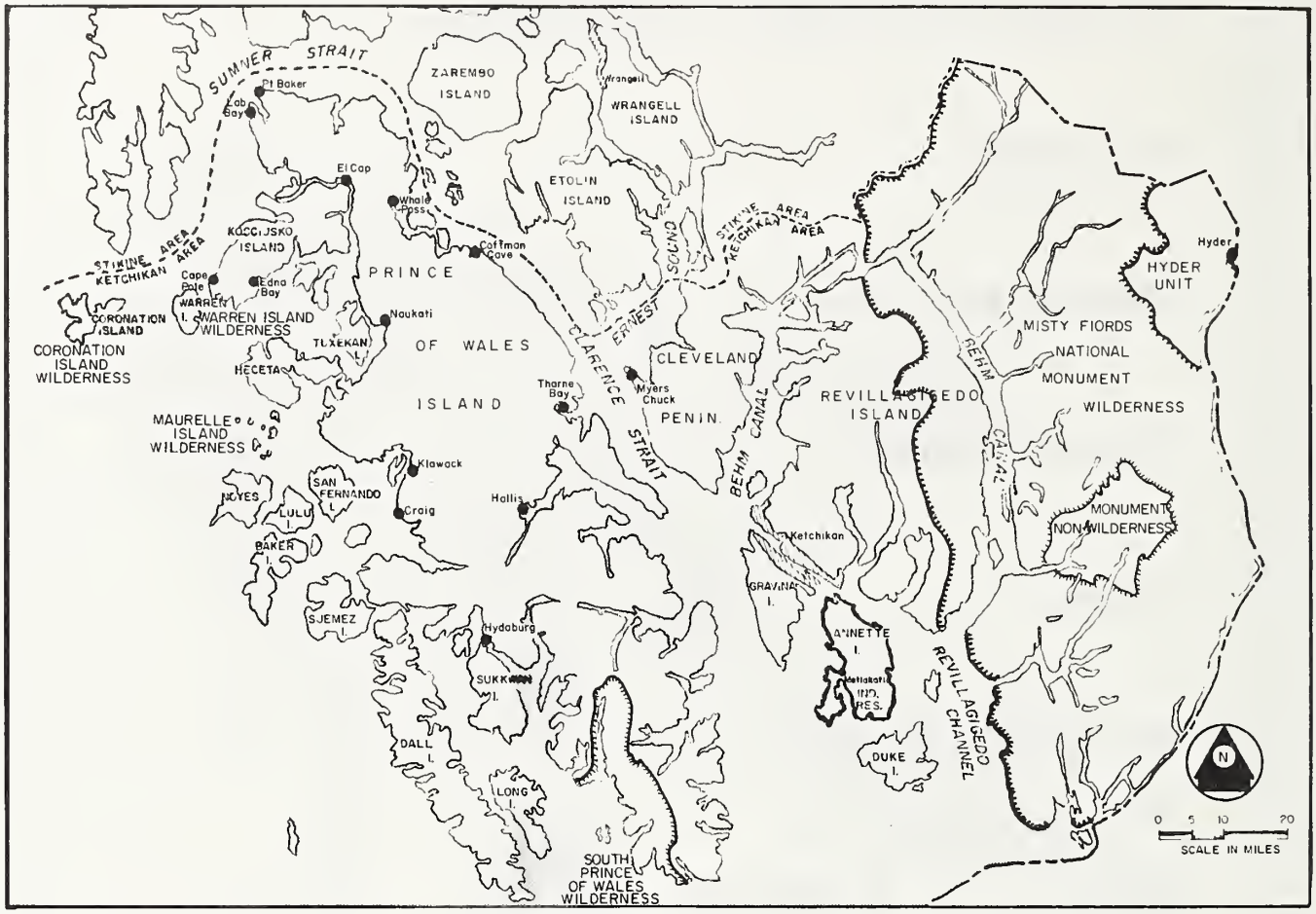

⊙ KETCHIKAN AREA ⊙

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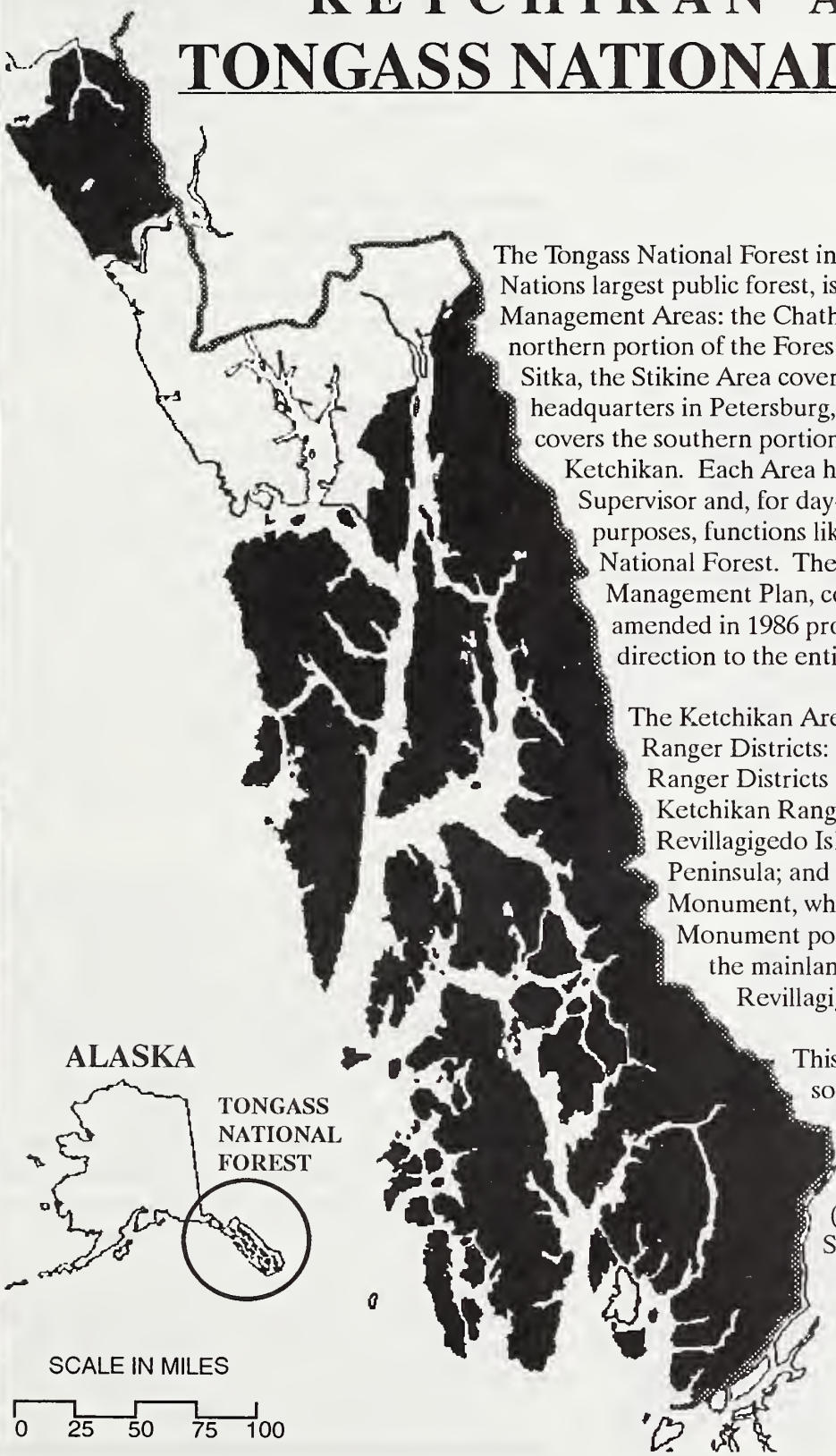
KETCHIKAN AREA
TONGASS NATIONAL FOREST



The Tongass National Forest in Southeast Alaska, the Nations largest public forest, is divided into three Management Areas: the Chatham Area covers the northern portion of the Forest with headquarters in Sitka, the Stikine Area covers the central portion with headquarters in Petersburg, and the Ketchikan Area covers the southern portion and is headquartered in Ketchikan. Each Area has its own Forest Supervisor and, for day-to-day management purposes, functions like an independent National Forest. The Tongass Land Management Plan, completed in 1979 and amended in 1986 provides management direction to the entire Forest.

The Ketchikan Area is managed through four Ranger Districts: Thorne Bay and Craig Ranger Districts on Prince of Wales Island; Ketchikan Ranger District on Revillagigedo Island and the Cleveland Peninsula; and Misty Fiords National Monument, which includes a non-Monument portion around Hyder, on the mainland and the east side of Revillagigedo Island.

This annual report describes some forest management issues in general as well as describing our program of work for fiscal year 1989 (October 1, 1988 to September 30, 1989).

Overall responsibility for management of the Ketchikan Area rests with Mike Lunn as Forest Supervisor and Joy Berg as Deputy Forest Supervisor. We are ably assisted by the four District/ Monument Rangers and by seven staff members. All of us are ready and willing to address questions and concerns you may have about the Forest, or to discuss your proposals for improving resource management and public service on the Ketchikan Area.

Specifically we are:

Name and Title	Telephone	Address
Mike Lunn **Forest Supervisor**	225-3101	All located at: USDA Forest Service Federal Building Ketchikan, AK 99901
Joy Berg **Deputy Forest Supervisor**	225-3101	
Paul McIntosh **Information**	225-3101	
Lee Nightingale **Business Management**	225-3101	
Jim Moe **Engineering and Aviation**	225-3101	
Ken Thompson **Fish and Wildlife**	225-3101	
Bob Latham **Recreation, Lands, Minerals, and Watershed**	225-3101	
Walt Dortch **Planning**	225-3101	
Pete Mondich **Timber and Fire**	225-3101	
Gary Laver **Craig District Ranger**	826-3271	USDA Forest Service P.O. Box 50 Craig, AK 99921
Pete Johnston **Thorne Bay District Ranger**	828-3304	USDA Forest Service P.O. Box 1 Thorne Bay, AK 99950
Logan Lee **Ketchikan District Ranger**	225-2148	USDA Forest Service 3031 Tongass Ave. Ketchikan, AK 99901
Paul Brewster **Misty Fiords** **Monument Ranger**	225-2148	USDA Forest Service 3031 Tongass Ave. Ketchikan, AK 99901

In addition to the above folks, it takes approximately 200 people working year round or seasonally to get our work done. Nearly half of our work force are professionals in fields such as fish and wildlife biology, various specialties in engineering, hydrology, landscape architecture, archaeology, minerals, business management, and others. About one-third of our work force are technicians in the above and other specialties, while the remainder provide the much-needed administrative and clerical support to keep things functioning smoothly. In addition much of the work described in the following pages could not have been done without the help of numerous contractors, cooperators, partners, and volunteers.

During the last year we have expanded our efforts to reach our goal of having a work force that better reflects the nation's cultural diversity. We have accelerated our external recruitment of new employees by participating on a regional recruitment team. We are also increasing our efforts to provide an ever improving work environment so that we can retain the new employees we do recruit. And, perhaps most importantly, we are making renewed efforts to listen to all employees and to you, the public, regarding our goals and objectives, our work priorities, and our management standards.

Partnerships

One of the more interesting and rewarding programs on the Ketchikan Area inhances our ability to greatly expand our accomplishments through partnerships with local communities, other organizations and volunteers. In these times of reduced federal budgets and work forces, we would be unable to provide or maintain many of the recreation facilities and wildlife habitat improvements which make this area so outstanding. Partnerships include both dollars and in-kind services, such as labor and use of equipment, donated from other federal, State and local Governments, construction and logging businesses, associations and societies and many individual volunteers. This year there were thousands of dollars and hours either contributed or worked toward many worthwhile projects. On the Thorne Bay Recreation Cost Share Projects this year alone there were over $300,000 in value accomplished with almost sixty percent of this from partnerships, including volunteers. Projects included work on shelters, trails, lake access, cave inventory, kayak routes, cabins, beach clean-up and creel census.

Volunteers

Volunteers have made invaluable contributions to the Ketchikan Area. For example, a husband and wife team on the Craig Ranger District assist in updating the land status atlas, serve as caretakers for a floating crew camp in the winter and help maintain buildings throughout the District. They also use their years of experience at Boeing to improve the maintenance and efficiency of the floating crew camp. In the last 6 years, another extremely versatile volunteer felled trees to obtain volume estimates, served as a remote camp caretaker, maintained recreation cabins, built the majority of the One Duck Shelter, designed and built a floating dock, assisted in the design of the pedestrian ramp and observation deck overlooking cable Creek fishpass, and did most of the ramp and deck construction. The dedication of these and many others has been invaluable to us in carrying out our work.

Sharing Information

Information sharing is important to us in the management of the Ketchikan Area. We need to know the public's concerns regarding our programs and projects, and the public needs to understand or be aware of the Area's programs, projects and practices. The dialog we have had with individuals and groups from Ketchikan to Craig to Washington D.C. has brought us all a better understanding of issues and concerns. It has also helped us to improve our management of the Ketchikan Area.

To help with this information sharing, we held 16 briefings in the field with Congressional staff members, Department of Agriculture and Office of Management and Budget officials, media people including Time and National Geographic Society, as well as our local and regional news media. We also briefed fishing groups, local government officials, and a number of interest groups. If success is measured in improved understanding of each other's concerns, then the briefings were a roaring success.

Other information sharing activities on the Ketchikan Area included news conferences, news releases, news photographer flights, the Public Lands Update column in the Ketchikan Daily News and guest presentations for local organizations and schools. We also have a volunteer public affairs specialist in Thorne Bay who has covered the Prince of Wales Island activities, and a volunteer freelance writer who is doing 4 mini-features for us.

The Ketchikan Area and the University of Alaska Southeast, Ketchikan Campus co-sponsored a series of Economic Diversity Grant workshops in Craig, Ketchikan and Sitka. We provided information on making proposals more competitive for the limited grant money available through the Forest Service. We also presented information on a new grant program for rural development. To round out the workshops, the Marine Advisory Program and the Alaska Department of Community and Regional Affairs discussed their programs and services, some of which could be used to match proposed Forest Service grants.

RECREATION

The recreation program is geared to increase customer satisfaction in the use of all of our recreation facilities, including developed campgrounds, dispersed camping areas, trails, cabins, and wilderness areas, as well as to protect the scenic beauty so important to us all.

The Ketchikan Area operates 51 developed camping sites in four campgrounds, three of them in the vicinity of Ketchikan and one very small campground at Staney Creek on Prince of Wales Island. We will soon complete Eagle's Nest campground on Prince of Wales Island under a contract with Woodard construction, Anchorage. When finished and in operation early next summer, this campground will provide 11 campsites.

In addition to camping in campgrounds, people can come and spend part of their day at one of our six day use picnic areas, enjoy any number of dispersed camping/picnic areas, or hike some of our 140 miles of developed trail. Several groups from Thorne Bay improved Sandy Beach day use site just outside of Thorne Bay this summer with the addition of a shelter constructed under a partnership agreement. Some of the partners provided materials, some design expertise, some supervision, and some labor.

Cabins and Shelters

The National Forests in Alaska have the distinction of providing the most extensive system of public use cabins in the National Forest System. The Ketchikan Area maintains 51 cabins and shelters. Most of the money for their annual maintenance comes to us in the form of directly returned rental fees for the cabins themselves. Some of the things visitors had to say about our cabins last year are:

"What a week! No phones, no TV, no radio, no place to go - just fish, eat and sleep - what a life."

"Caught a 152-pound halibut, no Joke!"

"This is a great place! Found the mink at the falls, loons on the lake, kittiwaits on the island and the killer hummingbird near the outhouse. Nearly full moon in the evening, Big Dipper directly overhead at night!"

"Thanks to the USFS crew who maintains this cabin. This was the first but certainly not the last time we are going to stay here. Absolutely fantastic!"

"No maid service, no dishwasher, no Cuissanart, this is paradise."

Southeast Alaska Visitor Information Center

Another major accomplishment for the Area is the completion of the conceptual design for the Southeast Alaska Visitor Information Center. This 16-agency center will provide information on federal and state lands in Alaska to both residents and visitors. Currently the contractor, C. B. Bettisworth, is doing the construction drawings for this building and the federal Department of Agriculture design center is working on the concept design for the exhibits.

Unique Area

We have initiated a new and exciting program in the limestone-rich north Prince of Wales area, a region riddled with caves and sinkholes. This year a volunteer group from the Glacier Grotto of the National Speleological Society explored several of these caves and found depths that rank these as the deepest caves in the United States. These cooperative investigations will continue next year.

CULTURAL RESOURCES

The Ketchikan Area has hundreds of historic and prehistoric sites that we must protect from damage and loss. We know that both authorized activities, such as road construction, and unauthorized activities, like digging for artifacts, can damage sites. We have located many sites, but we still need to locate and protect others.

During the 1989 field season archaeologists on the Ketchikan Area conducted field surveys for a variety of project activities including mining, recreation cabins, trails, timber harvest, road construction, and related activities and permits. These surveys identified sites for protection, or verified that the project areas contained no sites. Either way, they ensured that cultural resources were protected.

Cultural resource specialists initiated a preliminary management plan for the inventory and study of trees modified by early humans (culturally modified trees) located on National Forest lands. This inventory should provide useful information about prehistoric and historic utilization of forest resources such as cedar bark, pitch and the tree trunk itself. A survey of Back Island near Ketchikan located and documented 50 culturally modified trees and two small temporary, prehistoric campsites. One of the modified trees is an example of an aboriginal method of felling a tree by creating a large alcove with an adze and repeated charring. This tree will be removed and preserved for interpretive and research values. Initially, this cultural feature will be displayed at the Totem Heritage Center in Ketchikan. Additional analysis of samples collected from these investigations will be completed in the near future to determine when the sites were occupied or resources utilized.

Our folks spent a good part of the year developing research and inventory methods and standards and guidelines for cultural resource management and protection for use in the Forest Plan revision and the Ketchikan Pulp Company timber sale.

Japanese Partnership

The Cultural Resource program received a welcome boost from a Japanese archeology team from universities in Sapporo and Tokyo, Japan. They Returned to Alaska for a second field season to complete work they started in the summer of 1987. This year they interviewed native people in Ketchikan, Klawock and Hydaburg to document the history of Native people of the Heceta Island area and specifically Warm Chuck Village. During August, they returned to the Chuck Lake site and excavated two test units. These units contained approximately thirty microblades, five microblade-cores, several scrapers, a possible burin (prehistoric stone tool), a graver (engraving tool), and other worked flakes. They also located a cultural shell exposure on a steep slope facing Chuck Creek, and collected carbon samples for carbon dating.

Although their primary interest was the Chuck Lake site, they also located and investigated a previously undocumented site in a sea cave on Heceta Island and conducted preliminary testing of an extensive site in the southwestern Prince of Wales area. In addition to their work on National Forest land, they obtained Sealaska Corporation approval to investigate the Warm Chuck Village site. The history indicates that this seasonal fishing village may have been used for nearly 8,000 years and into the 1900"s. Information from all of these site investigations will help us as we analyze and interpret other sites in the area.

The Japanese team will analyze these collective investigations during the spring of 1990. They will return to the Ketchikan Area for another field season in 2990, and write their final report by March, 1992.

FISH AND WILDLIFE

To meet the diverse demands for fish and wildlife resources, we manage the Tongass National Forest in a manner that maintains quality habitat for over 400 species of wildlife, fish and shellfish. This quality habitat includes 20,000 miles of fish streams, which provides spawning and early rearing areas for salmon, one of the most important resources on the Tongass. Wildlife species provide many opportunities for use by the public, including commercial, sport and subsistence fishing and hunting along with almost unlimited opportunity for photography and viewing activities.

Fisheries

The Ketchikan Area improved 268 acres of fish habitat through lake fertilization and construction of 24 in-stream structures. These include Margaret Creek fish ladder on Revilla Island, Dog Salmon Creek fish ladder on Prince of Wales Island, Marx Creek spawning channel extension at Hyder, a fish passage improvement project at Hole-In-The-Wall Creek on Prince of Wales Island, fertilization of McDonald Lake, and the addition of several other fish habitat structures. For these and several other fisheries enhancement projects on the National Forest, Alaska Department of Fish and Game provided extensive and costly hatchery support critical to their success.

The Dog Salmon Creek Fish Pass illustrates a typical example of the improvement program. This fish ladder allows salmon passage past barrier falls to upstream spawning and rearing habitat. Up to 50 acres of additional habitat available to salmon will produce thousands of fish with an approximate annual value of $43,000, or over $1 million during the life of the fish pass. To construct the fish pass, the Craig Ranger District entered into its first fishery enhancement partnership with private industry, represented by Ketchikan Pulp Company, South Coast Inc., Gildersleeve Logging Inc., and. Ketchikan Pulp Company and Leslie Cutting Inc., also made important contributions to the construction of the Margaret Creek Fish ladder.

In another improvement activity we expanded the spawning channel at Marx Creek at Hyder, where returning chum salmon from earlier transplants filled the existing channel to capacity. We awarded the construction contract to Southeast Engineering Company, Ketchikan, who completed the 1600 foot channel expansion.

These and other fisheries enhancement projects, designed to increase the availability of salmon to the commercial, recreational, and subsistence fisheries, will have average annual production of 226,000 salmon worth in excess of $700,000. Cost for the projects totaled only $1,050,000, which means the investment will be returned in less than two years.

In recent years we have given increasing emphasis to management of streamside habitat on the Tongass. The Alaska Cooperative Forestry-Fisheries Research Working Group represented by the logging industry, Alaska Native corporations, state and federal fishery agencies, fishing groups, and citizens' conservation organizations in partnership with the Forest Service, developed guidelines that protect and enhance fish habitat in or adjacent to timber harvest areas. As a result of the guidelines, design, location and installation of drainage structures, and timing of the construction of roads have been changed. These measures and others, such as maintenance of existing downed logs and addition of new logs into selected stream segments and development of riparian management prescriptions for stream channel types, are used to maintain and/or improve the productivity of this extremely important fish habitat.

Wildlife

In fiscal year 1989 the Ketchikan Area completed 300 acres of wildlife habitat improvement, including forest canopy gaps, burning, thinning of young, overcrowded stands of trees, and treatments of logging residue. These treatments are all designed to enhance the productivity of young timber stands for wildlife and are estimated to provide over $800,000 ($53,000 annually) in recreation benefits over the next 15 years due to improved wildlife production.

Canopy Gaps are a relatively new concept in the management of Sitka Blacktail deer. By cutting out patches (approximately 75x75 feet) of close-growing timber stands 20 years after harvesting, we allow for production and growth of important plants which provide feed for the deer. Later as the trees continue to grow, these patches or gaps will become islands of food in the timber stands.

In addition, we conducted cooperative eagle nesting surveys with U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service; surveyed marbled murrelet populations with Alaska Department of Fish and Game, US Fish & Wildlife Service, and National Marine Fisheries Service; initiated cooperative swan surveys with Tongass Conservation Society; and ran two breeding bird survey transects. We also conducted a waterfowl nest survey on Thorne Bay Ranger District, a loon nesting survey with US Fish & Wildlife Service, two owl surveys with US Fish & Wildlife Service, deer pellet group surveys with ADF&G and the Christmas bird survey with members of the Audubon Society. These surveys provided data related to forest management on the Tongass as well as valuable information from other professionals and the community concerning our management.

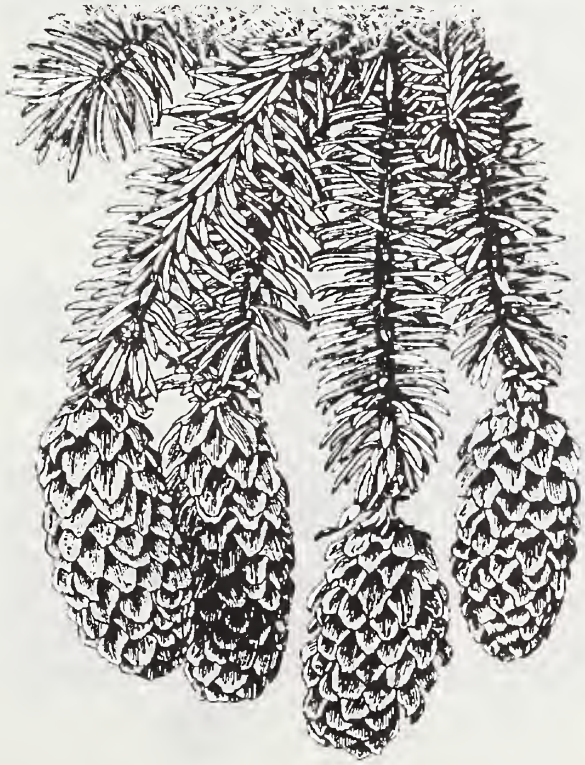
Dr. Jeff Yeo completed our Sitka Black-tailed deer study on Prince of Wales Island. The research conducted by contract with the Cooperative Wildlife Research Unit at the University of Idaho, provides some valuable insight and recommendations for forest management in Southeast Alaska. In addition, Julie Concannon initiated a three-year PhD research project on old growth forests under the direction of professor Jerry Franklin of the University of Washington. Her study will look at ecological characteristics and wildlife habitat implications.

TIMBER

With the timber industry being one of the top three non-government employers in the Ketchikan Area, the Forest's timber program is extremely important to the economy of Southeast Alaska including the Ketchikan community.

Commercial Forest Inventory

The complex process of providing a sustained timber flow to local industries begins with classifying the National Forest Lands for its suitability to produce commercial timber. A large part of the Tongass National Forest area is either classified as rock, ice and water, or is non-forest vegetation such as meadows, muskeg and alpine tundra. Even a portion of the tree covered land is not suitable for timber production. Examples include high elevation mountain hemlock stands and lodgepole pine adjacent to muskegs. Of the nearly 17 million acres on the Tongass National Forest only 34 percent or less than 6 million acres are capable of growing timber of commercial value. When Wilderness and other land allocations in the Tongass Forest Plan are considered the commercial forest land available for timber harvest is approximately 3.5 million acres or about 21 percent of all National Forest land on the Tongass.



We offer timber from the available commercial forest land to independent timber operators one sale at a time, and to Ketchikan Pulp Company through the 50-year sale. When timber is proposed for harvest, an interdisciplinary team of specialists develop a set of harvest alternatives, and conduct a detailed analysis of their effects. The team consists of experts in timber, soils, fish, wildlife, archeology, subsistence, recreation and engineering, to name a few. We also ask for ideas from the public at several key points in the process. We have even helped groups or individuals develop their own alternative for consideration. Once the alternatives have been analyzed, we decide which to implement, and offer the timber for sale.

Klawock Timber Alaska photo

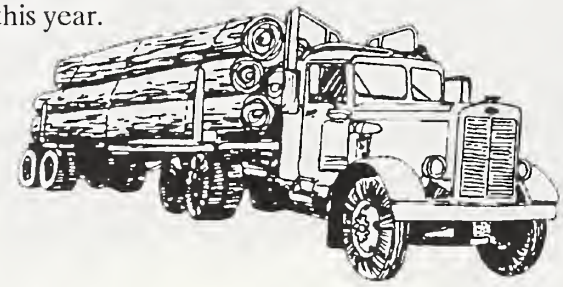
Long Term Sale Plan

We manage and plan for the Ketchikan Pulp Company timber harvest in 5-year operating periods, using the same process as we use for independent sales. We worked for over 3 years to complete the final 1989-94 operating plan. During that time, many people from state and federal agencies, as well as individuals became involved in the project. The results of the analysis and the disclosure of the effects were contained in the 1989-94 Operating Period for the Ketchikan Pulp Company Long Term Sale Area, Final Environmental Impact Statement. Based on this analysis the Regional Forester was able to evaluate the effects of the alternatives and select a preferred alternative which produced the best net public benefits. His selection is in the Record of Decision for the above EIS signed on June 2, 1989 which allows the harvesting of 960 million board feet over the next five year period.

Annual Timber Progam

Many of the Ketchikan Area specialists who worked on the EIS remain involved with its implementation to provide guidance for the protection of soil, water, scenery, wildlife and fish, and other resources and land uses.

The Ketchikan Area sold 149 million board feet of timber in fiscal year 1989. Timber markets and demand for wood products remained strong in 1989 with 255 million board feet harvested. The majority of the timber harvested is converted to dissolving pulp. Dissolving pulp is shipped to producers around the world to make a variety of wood, paper products and rayon for clothing apparel. Approximately 20 million board feet of dimension lumber was produced locally this year by sawmills in Ward Cove, Klawock, Metlakatla and Wrangell, as well as several smaller mills. We expect production to reach 60 million in 1990. The 20 million board feet produced enough lumber to build homes for 2,000 American families this year.



The Ketchikan Area portion of the available commercial forest lands are capable of providing 220.3 million board feet annually. The old-growth stands of timber typical of the area produce an average per acre harvest of 32 thousand board feet, and have no net yearly increase in volume due to insect and disease loss which equals the average annual growth. On the other hand, the managed stands of the future will yield 43.5 thousand board feet per acre. The maritime weather typical of the area provides ideal conditions for natural tree seedlings to become established on harvested areas to the point where young trees soon compete for growing space. Thinning these stands before they reach commercial size can increase the average volume to 49 thousand board feet per acre. This would be a 34 percent increase on each acre compared to the stands now being harvested. The Ketchikan Area thinned or removed excess unmerchantable trees on 870 acres this past year.

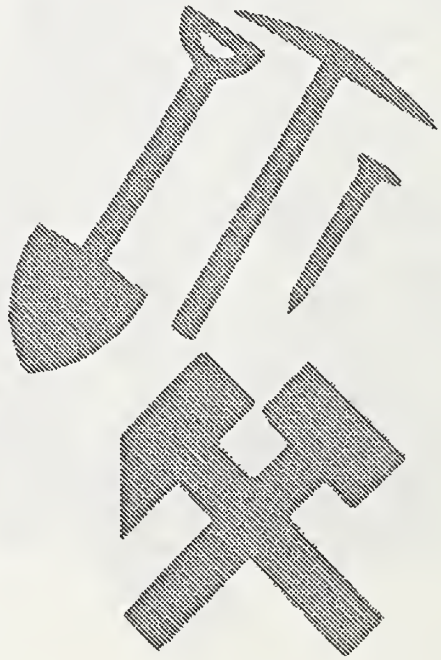
MINERALS AND GEOLOGY

A wide variety of mineral resources occur within the boundaries of the Ketchikan Area. Upon discovering a valuable mineral deposit, citizens may locate a mining claim, mine and remove the mineral from lands open to location. Examples of some locatable minerals on the Forest are gold, silver, copper, molybdenum, iron, nickel, lead, and zinc. We work with claimants to provide reasonable access to their claims, minimize adverse environmental impacts on surface resources, and ensure reasonable reclamation of disturbed lands.

Designated Wilderness, National Monuments, and other withdrawn areas are closed to mining claim location. Currently, 2,455,163 acres or about 47.8 percent of the Ketchikan Area is closed to mineral entry. These withdrawn areas, however, are subject to mining claims with valid existing rights established before the areas were withdrawn.

Mineral Program

With the addition of 654 new claims this year there is now a total of 8,810 mining claims located on the Ketchikan Area. Annual assessment work is conducted to maintain each claim and generally, this work does not significantly impact surface resources. The Hyder area administered by Misty Fiords National Monument experienced very active mineral exploration in 1989.



Quartz Hill Update

An update on the Quartz Hill project finds the development of the mining venture in about the same situation as last year. The decision on the preferred alternative has been appealed, and the outcome of the appeal and the possibility of further litigation is unknown. Even if the development was cleared through the legal process, delay in operation could result from low market conditions for molybdenum.

Mineral Materials

One of the major activities in the minerals and geology department is related to the management of mineral materials, which are non-locatable resources such as sand, stone and gravel. The dominant market for mineral materials is the use of surface rock on roads. The total Forest Service use between 1986 and 1989 was approximately 2,400,000 cubic yards or use of about 600,000 cubic yards a year. This figure does not include surface rock used in road reconstruction, temporary roads, log transfer facilities, and log sorting yards.

As the use of Forest roads increase and the Alaska Department Of Transportation assumes responsibility for road maintenance, the demand for crushed aggregate will increase. As land exchanges continue, new communities will require community mineral materials for development of roads, foundations for homes, schools, and other uses. The demand for National Forest rock in support of these growing communities will increase.

LANDS

To comply with the Alaska Native Claim Settlement Act and the Alaska Statehood Act we are effectively processing the State and Native land selections to assure that the public interests are retained and access to the National Forest system lands are maintained. We are working closely with the Alaska Department of Natural resources in the implementation of the States Prince of Wales Island Area Plan. A major effort is being made to coordinate the activities on the State managed tidelands and upland parcels with our forest management practices. We work very closely with the State and other Federal Resource management agencies to obtain authorizations for tideland easements, rights of ways, and other permits that are necessary to facilitate the management activities on the National Forest.

Special Land Uses

The Forest Service Special Use permit program allows individuals, organizations and agencies exclusive use of public lands for various purposes. These uses are authorized when there is no land other than National Forest available for the proposed activity, the proposal is in the public interest, and it is compatible with other local, State, and federal policies and management plans. Fees which are based upon fair market value of the land are charged for most permits.

There are over 140 uses under permit on the Ketchikan Area and many are unique to southeast Alaska. These uses vary from school sites to shore ties for State approved float homes. Special Use permits which have been issued in the past include: cedar shake mills, rough cut lumber mills, oyster

mariculture farms community utilities including a temporary landfill, road access, power transmission and outfitter/guide permits. One interesting application among those recently received is a proposal by the City of Thorne Bay for a wheeled plane airstrip.

U. S. Navy Facility Update

We are continuing to work with the U.S. Navy and other agencies on the proposed Southeast Alaska Acoustical Measurement Facility, located on Back Island in Behm Canal. Work on this facility by U.S. Navy contractors has just begun. The appeal of the final decision on this project was denied with the exception of additional Cultural Resource work, which was completed and documented through the State Historic Preservation Officer. The Ketchikan Ranger District will continue to coordinate with the Navy during project implementation.

TRANSPORTATION

Several projects affecting the Prince of Wales Island road system are underway that will affect the residents and visitors to the Island. The Forest Service in partnership with the State Department of Transportation and the Federal Highway Administration continued their joint program of upgrading major roads on the Island. This summer's projects included the completion of paving from Hollis to Klawock and the rebuilding of the highway from Control Lake to Thorne Bay. Upon completion, these roads become part of the State road system. One of the major benefits to local residents is that the State will remove snow during the winter, which would not be accomplished if they were retained as Forest Service System roads. Preconstruction work is continuing on the Forest Highway project from Control Lake to the Coffman Cove turnoff, and construction on the first 7 miles could start late next summer.

Work continues on permanent bridges on the main road system with completion of a bridge at Red Bay. Construction continues on the bridge crossing Yatuk Creek, which is the last log bridge on the road system tying the Island communities to the ferry system at Hollis.

Concern for the number of roads and the pressure that road access has on wildlife populations on the Island, resulted in an analysis of alternative road management strategies. Three alternatives for management of the road system were presented to the public, and through your involvement a decision was made to restrict access on 458 miles of existing and proposed roads. Under this access plan 889 miles of road will be open to the public by 1994.

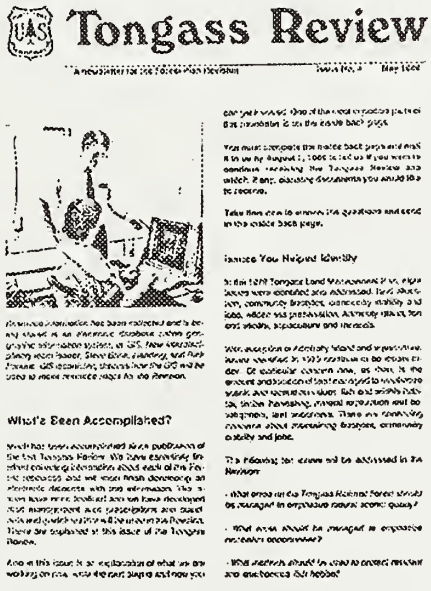
PLANNING

One of the more difficult activities on the Forest and the Ketchikan Area is coordinating the increasing demand for goods, services and uses on a fixed or sometimes shrinking land base. This is the challenge for many of our people involved in the revision of the Tongass Land Management Plan.

Issues to be dealt with in the Plan revision were identified from the more than 600 letters received in the first step. From this input new issues emerged such as biological diversity, management of Old Growth timber, and the possibility of additions to the National Wilderness system.

Geographic Information System and Resource Inventory

In addition to updating our list of issues, inventories of the various resources and uses on the Ketchikan Area and the rest of the Tongass are also being updated. This information is being stored on computers such as the Tongass Geographic Information System (GIS). Some of the inventories include: various recreation, fish, wildlife, soils, water, vegetation, land status, and geology. One unique inventory includes a new approach developed to display mineral resource locations and values. This information was developed in partnership with the Alaska Miners Association and the U.S. Department of Interior's Bureau of Mines. The mineral inventory also resulted in the development of a management prescription to be used in Forest Planning for mineral resources. This was the first time a National Forest developed a prescription to emphasize and manage locatable minerals.


Tongass Review

What's Been Accomplished?

Another unique inventory includes the gathering of information specific to subsistence use, both existing and historic. We will use this inventory to incorporate subsistence use into future decisions in the Tongass Plan revision.

One of the more valuable features of the GIS is the ability to display the many and varied resource and use inventories on computer-generated maps. Combinations of these maps allow planners, cooperators, decision makers and members of the interested public to see the inventories graphically as well as to visualize the effects of proposed resource activities. In addition to having a continuously updated resources inventory, the GIS system allows us to track our annual budget, work accomplishments, and Forest Plan Monitoring results into one efficient system. New uses for this system are being developed which will help us in all of our day-to-day work in the implementation of our Forest Plan.

Analysis of the Management Situation

The next product in the Forest Plan revision will be the results of the analysis of the current management situation. This analysis helps us understand what is currently happening on the Forest, what our capabilities are to produce resource outputs and uses, and what has to be given up in one resource area in order to meet demands from other resources or uses. This analysis should be completed and available for review soon. The Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Plan revision will probably not be available until late next summer.

Tongass Forest Plan Implementation

In addition to planning for the future the Planning section has responsibility for the continual implementation of the current Tongass Plan. Among other tasks, this involves updating and maintaining a list of projects and activities to meet the objectives of the Plan. A new emphasis is being placed on expanding the list to better reflect the needs of our partners. Our partners include you our public, who depend on the Forest for employment and/or pursuit of outdoor activities. We are currently involved in setting up a process for you to suggest projects and activities which will not only meet the Tongass Forest Plan objectives but which will better meet your needs. This process will include public meetings and other techniques to allow you the opportunity to make your suggestions know to us. We are excited about the unlimited possibilities this will provide and we know that you will take the opportunity to affect the future management of the Tongass National Forest and the Ketchikan Area.

SUGGESTION BOX

COMMENTS: Feel free to use this space for any comments or suggestions you may have about this report or any other aspect of National Forest management. Detach and mail to:

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